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LAYS AND BALLADS.

BY

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.



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PROEM,

INSCRIBED TO GEORGE HAMMERSLEY.



COME thou, my friend ;—the cool autumnal eves
About the hearth have drawn their magic rings ;
There, while his song of peace the cricket weaves,
The simmering hickory sings.

The winds unkennelled round the casements whine,
The sheltered hound makes answer in his dream,
And in the hayloft, hark, the cock at nine
Crows from the dusty beam.

The leafless branches chafe the roof all night,
And through the house the troubled noises go,

While, like a ghostly presence, thin and white
The frost foretells the snow.

The muffled owl within the swaying elm
Thrills all the air with sadness as he swings,
Till sorrow seems to spread her shadowy realm
About all outward things.

Come, then, my friend, and this shall seem no more —
Come when October walks his red domain,
Or when November from his windy floor
Winnows the hail and rain.

And when old Winter through his fingers numb
Blows till his breathings on the windows gleam ;
And when the mill-wheel spiked with ice is dumb
Within the neighbouring stream.

Then come, for nights like these have power to wake
The calm delight no others may impart,
When round the fire true souls communing make
A summer in the heart.

And I will weave athwart the mystic gloom,
 With hand grown weird in strange romance, for thee
 Bright webs of fancy from the golden loom
 Of charmèd Poesy.

And let no censure in thy looks be shown,
 That I, with hands adventurous and bold,
 Should grasp the enchanted shuttle which was thrown
 Through mightier warps of old.

THE STRANGER ON THE SILL.

BETWEEN broad fields of wheat and corn
Is the lowly home where I was born ;
The peach-tree leans against the wall,
And the woodbine wanders over all ;
There is the shaded doorway still,
But a stranger's foot has crossed the sill. .

There is the barn — and, as of yore,
I can smell the hay from the open door,
And see the busy swallow's throng,
And hear the peewee's mournful song ;
But the stranger comes — oh ! painful proof —
His sheaves are piled to the heated roof.

There is the orchard—the very trees
Where my childhood knew long hours of ease,
And watched the shadowy moments run
Till my life imbibed more shade than sun :
The swing from the bough still sweeps the air,
But the stranger's children are swinging there.

There bubbles the shady spring below,
With its bulrush brook where the hazels grow ;
'T was there I found the calamus root,
And watched the minnows poise and shoot,
And heard the robin lave his wing,
But the stranger's bucket is at the spring.

Oh, ye who daily cross the sill,
Step lightly, for I love it still ;
And when you crowd the old barn eaves,
Then think what countless harvest sheaves
Have passed within that scented door
To gladden eyes that are no more.

Deal kindly with these orchard trees ;
And when your children crowd their knees,

Their sweetest fruit they shall impart,
As if old memories stirred their heart :
To youthful sport still leave the swing,
And in sweet reverence hold the spring.

The barn, the trees, the brook, the birds,
The meadows with their lowing herds,
The woodbine on the cottage wall —
My heart still lingers with them all.
Ye strangers on my native sill,
Step lightly, for I love it still !

THE MAID OF LINDEN LANE.

LITTLE maiden, you may laugh
That you see me wear a staff,
For your laughter's but the chaff
From the melancholy grain.
Through the shadows long and cool
You are tripping down to school ;
But your teacher's cloudy rule
Only dulls the shining pool
With its loud and stormy rain.

There's a higher lore to learn
Than his knowledge can discern,
There's a valley deep and dorn
In a desolate domain ;

But for this he has no chart —
Shallow science, shallow art !
Thither — oh, be still, my heart —
One too many did depart
 From the halls of Linden Lane.

I can teach you better things ;
For I know the secret springs
Where the spirit wells and sings
 Till it overflows the brain.
Come when eve is closing in,
When the spiders gray begin,
Like philosophers, to spin
Misty tissues, vain and thin,
 Through the shades of Linden Lane.

While you sit as in a trance,
Where the moon-made shadows dance,
From the distaff of Romance
 I will spin a silken skein :
Down the misty years gone by
I will turn your azure eye ;

You shall see the changeful sky
Falling dark or hanging high
Over the halls of Linden Lane.

Come, and sitting by the trees,
Over long and level leas,
Stretched between us and the seas,
I can point the battle-plain :
If the air comes from the shore
We may hear the billows roar ;
But oh ! never, nevermore
Shall the wind come as of yore
To the halls of Linden Lane.

Those were weary days of wo,
Ah ! yes, many years ago,
When a cruel foreign foe
Sent his fleets across the main.
Though all this is in your books,
There are countless words and looks,
Which, like flowers in hidden nooks,
Or the melody of brooks,
There 's no volume can retain.

Come, and if the night be fair,
And the moon be in the air,
I can tell you when and where
 Walked a tender loving twain :
Though it cannot be, alas !
Yet, as in a magic glass,
We will sit and see them pass
Through the long and rustling grass
 At the foot of Linden Lane.

Yonder did they turn and go,
Through the level lawn below,
With a stately step and slow,
 And long shadows in their train :
Weaving dreams no thoughts could mar,
Down they wandered long and far,
Gazing toward the horizon's bar
On their love's appointed star
 Rising in the Lion's Mane.

As across a summer sea,
Love sailed o'er the quiet lea,
Light as only love may be,
 Freighted with no care or pain.—

Such the night ; but with the morn
Brayed the distant bugle-horn—
Louder ! louder ! it was borne—
Then were anxious faces worn
 In the halls of Linden Lane.

With the trumpet's nearer bray,
Flashing but a league away,
Saw we arms and banners gay
 Stretching far along the plain.
Neighing answer to the call,
Burst our chargers from the stall ;
Mounted, here they leaped the wall,
There the stream : while in the hall
 Eyes were dashed with sudden rain.

Belted for the fiercest fight,
And with swimming plume of white,
Passed the lover out of sight
 With the hurrying hosts amain.
Then the thunders of the gun
On the shuddering breezes run,

And the clouds o'erswept the sun,
Till the heavens hung dark and dun
Over the halls of Linden Lane.

Few that joined the fiery fray
Lived to tell how went the day ;
But that few could proudly say
How the foe had fled the plain.
Long the maiden's eyes did yearn
For her cavalier's return ;
But she watched alone to learn
That the valley deep and dorn
Was her desolate domain.

Leave your books awhile apart ;
For they cannot teach the heart ;
Come, and I will show the chart
Which shall make the mystery plain.
I can tell you hidden things
Which your knowledge never brings ;
For I know the secret springs
Where the spirit wells and sings
Till it overflows the brain.

Ah, yes, lightly sing and laugh—
Half a child and woman half;
For your laughter's but the chaff
 From the melancholy grain;
And, ere many years shall fly,
Age will dim your laughing eye,
And like me you'll totter by;
For remember, love, that I
 Was the Maid of Linden Lane.

A SONG.

BRING me the juice of the honey fruit,
The large translucent, amber-hued,
Rare grapes of southern isles, to suit
The luxury that fills my mood.

And bring me only such as grew
Where rarest maidens tend the bowers,
And only fed by rain and dew
Which first had bathed a bank of flowers.

They must have hung on spicy trees
In airs of far enchanted vales,

And all night heard the ecstasies
Of noble-throated nightingales :

So that the virtues which belong
To flowers may therein tasted be,
And that which hath been thrilled with song
May give a thrill of song to me.

For I would wake that string for thee
Which hath too long in silence hung,
And sweeter than all else should be
The song which in thy praise is sung.

A BUTTERFLY IN THE CITY.

DEAR transient spirit of the fields,
Thou com'st without distrust,
To fan the sunshine of our streets
Among the noise and dust.

Thou ledest in thy wavering flight
My footsteps unaware,
Until I seem to walk the vales
And breathe thy native air.

And thou hast fed upon the flowers,
And drained their honeyed springs,
Till every tender hue they wore
Is blooming on thy wings.

I bless the fresh and flowery light
Thou bringest to the town,
But tremble lest the hot turmoil
Have power to weigh thee down ;

For thou art like the poet's song,
Arrayed in holiest dyes,
Though it hath drained the honeyed wells
Of flowers of Paradise,

Though it hath brought celestial hues
To light the ways of life,
The dust shall weigh its pinions down
Amid the noisy strife.

And yet, perchance, some kindred soul
Shall see its glory shine,
And feel its wings within his heart
As bright as I do thine.

THE BEGGAR OF NAPLES.

THE music of the marriage bell
Woke all the morning air to pleasure,
And breasts there were that rose and fell
To the delightful measure.
Oh, well it were if they might hear alway
The music of their nuptial day
Flowing, as o'er enchanted lakes and streams,
Out of the land of dreams—
Sweet sounds that melt but never cease,
Dropped from celestial bells of peace.

Oh, well it were if those rare bridal flowers
Had drunken deep of life's perpetual dews,

Had drunken of those charmed showers
For ever falling in ambrosial hues
Through the far loving skies,
Beyond the flaming walls of long-lost Paradise;
Or grown beside that fabled river
Where it is spring-time ever;
Where, when the aged pilgrim stooped and drank,
He rose again upon that primrose bank
In all the bloom of youth to bloom for ever.
Ah, well for Beauty's transient bowers
If they might bud and blow in life's autumnal hours:—
For she, who wore that bridal wreath
Was Naples' noblest child;
The fairest maid that e'er beguiled
An Abbot of a prayerful breath.
And he who rode beside her there
Was Fame and Fortune's richest heir;
One who had come from foreign realms afar
To dazzle like a new-discovered star.
Yet as they passed between the crowd
He looked not scornfully nor proud,
But to the beggars thronging every side
Scattered the golden coin in plenteous rain,
And smiled to see their joy insane.
And passing, thus addressed the bride:

“ The merry bells make music sweet,
But never to the beggar’s ear
Fell music half so sweet and clear
As the chime of gold when it strikes the street;
It drives their hearts to swifter swinging,
And fills their brains with gladder ringing
Than ever bells will swing or ring,
Even though the sturdy sacristan
Should labour the very best he can
To chime for the wedding of a king.
Such sights to me will always bring
The story of a beggar, who
Perchance has ofttimes begged of you ;
And here the tale may well be told,
To wile away this idle gait
That keeps us from our happy fate :
For Time is very lame and old
Whene’er the surly gray-beard brings
A prayed-for pleasure on his wings ;
But robbing us of a joy can flee
As fleet of foot as Mercury.

“ Avoiding every wintry shade,
The lazzaroni crawled to sunny spots,—
At every corner miserable knots
Pursued their miserable trade ;

And held the sunshine in their asking palms,
Which gave unthanked its glowing alms,
Thawing the blood until it ran
As wine within a vintage runs.
And there was one among that begging clan,
One of Italia's listless dreamy sons,
A native Neapolitan —
A boy whose cheeks had drawn their olive tan
From fifteen summer suns.
Long had he stood with naked feet
Upon the lava of the street,
With shadowy eyes cast down,
Making neither a smile nor frown,
And in the crowd he stood alone,
Alone with empty hanging hands,
And through his brain the idle dreams
Slid down like idle sands ;
Or hung like mists o'er sleeping streams
In uninhabitable lands.
To him, I ween, the same,
All seasons went and came,
Nor did ambition's pomp and show
Disturb his fancy's tranquil flow ;
For like the blossom of the soil
Existence was his only toil.

“ One morn (the bells had summoned all to mass)
He knelt before the old cathedral door—
At such a place the wealthier who pass
Will throw a pious pittance to the poor,
Who kneel with face demure,
With their mute eyes and hands saying their ‘ alas!’
Oh, beautiful it was to see him there,
Looking his wordless prayer,
With solemn head depressed,
And hands laid crosswise on his breast,—
Such figures saw Murillo in his dream,
The painter and the pride of Spain;
With such he made his living canvass gleam,
As canvass touched by man may never gleam again.

“ Upon the beggar’s heart the matin hymn
Fell faint and dim,
As when upon some margin of the sea
The fisher breathes the briny air,
And hears the far waves’ symphony,
But hears it unaware.
The music from the lofty aisle,
And all the splendour of the sacred pile,—
The pictures hung at intervals
Like windows, giving from the walls
Clear glimpses of the days ago,
From that blest hour when over Bethlehem shone

The shepherd's Star, until that darker time
When groaned the earth aloud with agony sublime.—
All were unheeded,
And came, but as his breath;
Or if there came a thought, that thought unneeded
Even in its birth met death.
The names of Raphael,—Angelo,—Lorraine,—
Da Vinci,—Rosa,—Titian,—and the rest
Are sounds to thrill the Italian's soul and brain,
With all the impulse native to his breast;
And Dante,—Petrarch,—these are mighty names
The meanest tongue with a true pride proclaims;
And Ariosto's song a loved bequest;
And Tasso's sung by all—by all is loved and blest.
But what cared he, the sunburnt beggar-boy?
All these bequeathed no other joy
Than did the silent stars,
Or morn or evening with their golden bars,
Or the great azure arch of day,
Or his own bright, unrivalled bay,
Or old Vesuvius' deathless flames—
And these to him alone were empty sights and names.

“Few were there who did any alms bestow,
For few will hear accustomed sounds of wo,
Yet there was one among that few

Who but a moment stopped,
And in the beggar's hands the silver dropped,
And shed the benediction of her smile.
Such smile as hers might well renew
A heart to its lost light, and might beguile
The shadow of a mourner's hour ;
Such smiles are like the blessed dew
By evening shed upon a wayside flower,
Sinking to the heart of hearts with a miraculous power.
The earliest primrose of the spring
Which at the brookside, suddenly in sight,
Gleams like a water sprite ;
And the first herald bird on southern wing
Chanting his wild, enthusiastic rhyme
About the summer time—
Wake in the soul an instant, deep delight!
But there are eyes whose first sweet look
Outshines the primrose by the brook ;
And there are lips whose simplest words
Outrival even the spring-time birds.
Ah, well, I ween, the beggar felt their power,
And wore them in his heart from that bright hour.
She passed—a maiden very young and fair,
Of an illustrious house the pride and heir ;
She passed—but ah, she left
The miserable boy bereft!—

Bereft of all that quiet which had lain
Like a low mist within his brain,—
The idle fogs of some rank weedy isle
Hanging on the breezeless atmosphere,
Over a miasmatic mere ;—
All this the beauty of her smile
Had blown into a storm that would not rest again.
At once upstarting from his knees
He watched her as she went ;
The blood awakened from its slothful ease,
Through all his frame a flaming flood was sent.
He stood as with a statue's fixed surprise,
Great wonder making marble in his eyes !
She, like a morn, had dawned upon his soul ;
And now he saw the marvellous whole
Of that mysterious land,
And felt a sense of awe as they who stand
For the first time upon an alien strand,—
Some sailor of a foreign sea,
Who, from the smooth waves swinging lazily,
Is thrown upon a shore
Where life is full of noise and strife for evermore.
He stood awake ! and suddenly there burst
The music of the organ on his brain,
And into every sense athirst
Dispensed a welcome rain.

Now that his soul had passed from its eclipse
All things at once became a glorious show;
Now could he see the sainted pictures glow;
And instantly unto his lips
Rolled fragments of old song—
Fragments which had been thrown
Into his heart unknown,
And buried there had lain in silence deep and long.

“ He saw his fellows kneel where he had knelt
With tattered garb and supplicating air;
And for the first time in his life he felt
How mean was his attire, and that his feet were bare.
He sighed and bit his lips and passed away;
And from that day,
His fellows idly as before
Without a hope, without a care,
Stood clustered in the sunny air,
But there the beggar boy was seen no more.

“ His childhood, like a dry and sandy bar,
Lay all behind him as he hurled
His soul's hot bark to sea, and wide unfurled
The straining sail upon a billowy world.
And now he joined the sacred fleet afar,
And 'mid tempestuous waves of war
Defied the Saracen and Death,

And won the warrior's laurel wreath,
And gave his beggar name to Fame's industrious breath.

"Years came and went, and no one missed the boy,
Nor wept his long farewell;
They little guessed how much their joy
Was of his deeds to tell.

And when he knew his native town
Had learned to talk of his renown;
The youth a bearded man returned,
And more than for renown he yearned
To see that blessed smile again
Which erst made beauty in his brain,
And ever in the van of war
Had shone a most propitious star.
He came, and she of whom he long had dreamed
With hopes which nought could e'er destroy,
In brighter beauty on him beamed,
And blessed him with a deeper joy;
Even she, the noblest lady of the land,
Bestowed on him her virgin hand!
Ah, sure it was the fairest alms
That ever blessed a beggar's palms!

"To him the chime which filled the skies
Upon his nuptial morn,
When down the loving breezes borne,

Did seem to be by angels rung
From silver bells of Paradise,
In golden turrets hung.
And she, who woke the boy to man,
As little dreamed, I guess, as now,
My gentle lady, as dost thou,
How proud she was to wed that barefoot Neapolitan."

THE DESERTED ROAD.



ANCIENT road, that wind'st deserted
Through the level of the vale,
Sweeping toward the crowded market
Like a stream without a sail ;

Standing by thee, I look backward,
And, as in the light of dreams,
See the years descend and vanish,
Like thy whitely tented teams.

Here I stroll along the village
As in youth's departed morn ;
But I miss the crowded coaches,
And the driver's bugle-horn—

Miss the crowd of jovial teamsters
Filling buckets at the wells,
With their wains from Conestoga,
And their orchestras of bells.

To the mossy way-side tavern
Comes the noisy throng no more,
And the faded sign, complaining,
Swings, unnoticed, at the door;

While the old, decrepid tollman,
Waiting for the few who pass,
Reads the melancholy story
In the thickly springing grass.

Ancient highway, thou art vanquished ;
The usurper of the vale
Rolls in fiery, iron rattle,
Exultations on the gale.

Thou art vanquished and neglected ;
But the good which thou hast done,
Though by man it be forgotten,
Shall be deathless as the sun.

Though neglected, gray and grassy,
Still I pray that my decline
May be through as vernal valleys
And as blest a calm as thine.

MIDNIGHT.

THE moon looks down on a world of snow,
And the midnight lamp is burning low,
And the fading embers mildly glow
 In their bed of ashes soft and deep ;
All, all is still as the hour of death ;
I only hear what the old clock saith,
And the mother and infant's easy breath,
 That flows from the holy land of Sleep.

Or the watchman who solemnly wakes the dark,
With a voice like a prophet's when few will hark,
And the answering hounds that bay and bark
 To the red cock's clarion horn—

The world goes on—the restless world,
With its freight of sleep through the darkness hurled,
Like a mighty ship, when her sails are furled
On a rapid but noiseless river borne.

Say on, old clock—I love you well,
For your silver chime, and the truths you tell,
Your every stroke is but the knell
Of hope, or sorrow buried deep ;
Say on—but only let me hear
The sound most sweet to my listening ear,
The child and the mother breathing clear
Within the harvest-fields of Sleep.

Thou watchman, on thy lonely round,
I thank thee for that warning sound ;
The clarion cock and the baying hound
Not less their dreary vigils keep ;
Still hearkening, I will love you all,
While in each silent interval
I can hear those dear breasts rise and fall
Upon the airy tide of Sleep.

Old world, on Time's benighted stream
Sweep down till the stars of morning beam
From orient shores—nor break the dream

That calms my love to pleasure deep ;
Roll on, and give my Bud and Rose
The fulness of thy best repose,
The blessedness which only flows
Along the silent realms of Sleep.

THE TWO DOVES.

WHEN the Spring's delightful store
Brought the bluebirds to our bowers,
And the poplar at the door
Shook the fragrance from its flowers,
Then there came two wedded doves,
And they built among the limbs,
And the murmur of their loves
Fell like mellow, distant hymns,
There, until the Spring had flown,
Did they sit and sing, alone,
In the broad and flowery branches.

With the scented Summer breeze
How their music swam around,
Till my spirit sailed the seas
Of enchanted realms of sound!
“Soul,” said I, “thy dream of youth
Is not fancy, nor deceives,
For I hear Love’s blissful truth
Prophesied among the leaves;
Therefore till the Summer’s flown
Sit and sing, but not alone,
In the broad and flowery branches.”

Then the harvest came and went,
And the Autumn marshalled down
All his host, and spread his tent
Over fields and forests brown;
Then the doves, one evening, hied
To their old accustomed nest;
One went up, but drooped and died,
With an arrow in its breast—
Died and dropped; while there, alone,
Sat the other, making moan,
In the broad and withering branches.

There it sat and mourned its mate,
 With a never-ending moan,
Till I thought perchance its fate
 Was prophetic of my own ;
And at each lament I heard,
 How the tears sprang to my eyes !
O ! I could have clasped the bird
 And communed with it in sighs ;
But it drooped—and with a moan,
 Closed its eyes, and there, alone,
Dropped from out the leafless branches.

I beheld it on the ground,
 Press the brown leaves, cold and dead,
And my brain went round and round,
 And I clasped my throbbing head,
While thus spake a voice of Love :
 “ Rise, thou timid spirit, rise !
Earth has claimed the fallen dove—
 But thy soul shall cleave the skies ;
While the angel, earlier flown,
 Shall sit waiting thee, alone,
In the green eternal branches ! ”

SONG FOR A SABBATH MORNING.



ARISE, ye nations, with rejoicing rise,
And tell your gladness to the listening skies ;
Come out forgetful of the week's turmoil,
From halls of mirth and iron gates of toil ;
Come forth, come forth, and let your joy increase
Till one loud pæan hails the day of peace.
Sing, trembling age, ye youths and maidens sing ;
Ring, ye sweet chimes, from every belfry ring ;
Pour the grand anthem till it soars and swells,
And heaven seems full of great aerial bells !

Behold the Morn from orient chambers glide,
With shining footsteps, like a radiant bride ;
The gladdened brooks proclaim her on the hills,
And every grove with choral welcome thrills.
Rise, ye sweet maidens, strew her path with flowers,
With sacred lilies from your virgin bowers ;
Go, youths, and meet her with your olive boughs ;
Go, age, and greet her with your holiest vows ;—
See where she comes, her hands upon her breast,
The sainted Sabbath comes, and smiles the world to rest.

THE BRICKMAKER.*



I

LET the blinded horse go round
Till the yellow clay be ground,
And no weary arms be folded
Till the mass to brick be moulded.

In no stately structures skilled,
What the temple we would build?
Now the massive kiln is risen—
Call it palace—call it prison;
View it well: from end to end
Narrow corridors extend,—

* The plan of this poem may remind the reader of Schiller's "Song of the Bell;" but the resemblance is entirely accidental, as the author had not read that poem when the "Brickmaker" was written. It was suggested, a few years since, by seeing a brick kiln in full operation, near Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Long, and dark, and smothered aisles :—
Choke its earthy vaults with piles
 Of the resinous yellow pine ;
Now thrust in the fettered fire—
Hearken ! how he stamps with ire,
 Treading out the pitchy wine ;
Wrought anon to wilder spells
 Hear him shout his loud alarms ;
 See him thrust his glowing arms
Through the windows of his cells.

But his chains at last shall sever ;
Slavery lives not for ever ;
And the thickest prison wall
Into ruin yet must fall.
Whatsoever falls away
Springeth up again, they say ;
Then, when this shall break asunder,
And the fire be freed from under,
Tell us what imperial thing
From the ruin shall upspring ?

There shall grow a stately building,
 Airy dome and columned walls ;
Mottos writ in richest gilding
 Blazing through its pillared halls.

In those chambers, stern and dreaded,
They, the mighty ones, shall stand ;
There shall sit the hoary-headed
Old defenders of the land.

There shall mighty words be spoken,
Which shall thrill a wondering world ;
Then shall ancient bonds be broken,
And new banners be unfurled.

But anon those glorious uses
In these chambers shall lie dead,
And the world's antique abuses,
Hydra-headed, rise instead.

But this wrong not long shall linger—
The old capitol must fall ;
For, behold ! the fiery finger
Flames along the fated wall !

II

Let the blinded horse go round
Till the yellow clay be ground,

And no weary arms be folded
Till the mass to brick be moulded—
Till the heavy walls be risen
And the fire is in his prison :
But when break the walls asunder,
And the fire is freed from under,
Say again what stately thing
From the ruin shall upspring ?

There shall grow a church whose steeple
To the heavens shall aspire ;
And shall come the mighty people
To the music of the choir.

On the infant, robed in whiteness,
Shall baptismal waters fall,
While the child's angelic brightness
Sheds a halo over all.

There shall stand enwreathed in marriage
Forms that tremble—hearts that thrill—
To the door Death's sable carriage
Shall bring forms and hearts grown still !

Decked in garments richly glistening,
Rustling wealth shall walk the aisle ;
And the poor, without stand listening,
Praying in their hearts the while.

There the veteran shall come weekly
With his cane, oppressed and poor,
'Mid the horses standing meekly,
Gazing through the open door.

But these wrongs not long shall linger—
The presumptuous pile must fall ;
For, behold ! the fiery finger
Flames along the fated wall !

III

Let the blinded horse go round
Till the yellow clay be ground ;
And no weary arms be folded
Till the mass to brick be moulded—
Say again what stately thing
From the ruin shall upspring ?

Not the hall with columned chambers,
 Starred with words of liberty,
Where the freedom-canting members
 Feel no impulse of the free ;

Not the pile where souls in error
 Hear the words, “ Go, sin no more !”
But a dusky thing of terror,
 With its cells and grated door.

To its inmates each to-morrow
 Shall bring in no tide of joy.
Born in darkness and in sorrow
 There shall stand the fated boy.

With a grief too loud to smother,
 With a throbbing, burning head—
There shall groan some desperate mother,
 Nor deny the stolen bread !

There the veteran, a poor debtor,
 Marked with honourable scars,
Listening to some clanking fetter,
 Shall gaze idly through the bars :

Shall gaze idly, not demurring,
 Though with thick oppression bowed ;
While the Many, doubly erring,
 Shall walk honoured through the crowd.

Yet these wrongs not long shall linger—
 The benighted pile must fall ;
For, behold ! the fiery finger
 Flames along the fated wall !

IV

Let the blinded horse go round
Till the yellow clay be ground ;
And no weary arms be folded
Till the mass to brick be moulded—
Till the heavy walls be risen
And the fire is in his prison.
Capitol, and church, and jail,
Like our kiln at last shall fail ;
Every shape of earth shall fade ;
But the Heavenly Temple made
For the sorely tried and pure,
With its Builder shall endure !

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

LONG have I gazed upon all lovely things,
Until my soul was melted into song,—
Melted with love till from its thousand springs
The stream of adoration, swift and strong,
Swept in its ardour, drowning brain and tongue,
Till what I most would say was borne away unsung.

The brook is silent when it mirrors most
Whate'er is grand or beautiful above ;
The billow which would woo the flowery coast
Dies in the first expression of its love ;

And could the bard consign to living breath
Feelings too deep for thought, the utterance were death !

The starless heavens at noon are a delight ;
The clouds a wonder in their varying play,
And beautiful when from their mountainous height
The lightning's hand illumines the wall of day :—
The noisy storm bursts down, and passing brings
The rainbow poised in air on unsubstantial wings.

But most I love the melancholy night—
When with fixed gaze I single out a star
A feeling floods me with a tender light—
A sense of an existence from afar,
A life in other spheres of love and bliss,
Communion of true souls—a loneliness in this !

There is a sadness in the midnight sky—
An answering fulness in the heart and brain,
Which tells the spirit's vain attempt to fly
And occupy those distant worlds again.
At such an hour Death's were a loving trust,
If life could then depart in its contempt of dust.

It may be that this deep and longing sense
Is but the prophecy of life to come ;
It may be that the soul in going hence
May find in some bright star its promised home ;
And that the Eden lost for ever here
Smiles welcome to me now from yon suspended sphere.

There is a wisdom in the light of stars,
A wordless lore which summons me away ;
This ignorance belongs to earth which bars
The spirit in these darkened walls of clay,
And stifles all the soul's aspiring breath ;—
True knowledge only dawns within the gates of Death.

Imprisoned thus, why fear we then to meet
The angel who shall ope the dungeon door,
And break these galling fetters from our feet,
To lead us up from Time's benighted shore ?
Is it for love of this dark cell of dust,
Which, tenantless, awakes but horror and disgust ?

Long have I mused upon all lovely things ;
But thou, oh Death ! art lovelier than all ;

Thou sheddest from thy recompensing wings

A glory which is hidden by the pall—

The excess of radiance falling from thy plume

Throws from the gates of Time a shadow on the tomb.

THE LIGHT OF OUR HOME.

OH, thou whose beauty on us beams
With glimpses of celestial light ;
Thou halo of our waking dreams,
And early star that crown'st our night ;

Thy light is magic where it falls ;
To thee the deepest shadow yields ;
Thou bring'st unto these dreary halls
The lustre of the summer-fields.

There is a freedom in thy looks
To make the prisoned heart rejoice ;—
In thy blue eyes I see the brooks,
And hear their music in thy voice.

And every sweetest bird that sings
Hath poured a charm upon thy tongue ;
And where the bee enamoured clings,
There surely thou in love hast clung :—

For when I hear thy laughter free,
And see thy morning-lighted hair,
As in a dream at once I see
Fair upland realms and valleys fair.

I see thy feet empearled with dew,
The violet's and the lily's loss ;
And where the waving woodland woos
Thou lead'st me over beds of moss ;—

And by the busy runnel's side,
Whose waters, like a bird afraid,
Dart from their fount, and flashing, glide
Athwart the sunshine and the shade.

Or larger streams our steps beguile ;—
We see the cascade, broad and fair,
Dashed headlong down to foam, the while
Its iris-spirit leaps to air !

Alas! as by a loud alarm,
The fancied turmoil of the falls
Hath driven me back and broke the charm
Which led me from these alien walls:—

Yes, alien, dearest child, are these
Close city walls to thee and me:
My homestead was embowered with trees,
And such thy heritage should be:—

And shall be;—I will make for thee
A home within my native vale,
Where every brook and ancient tree
Shall whisper some ancestral tale.

Now once again I see thee stand,
As down the future years I gaze,
The fairest maiden of the land,
The spirit of those sylvan ways.

And in thy looks again I trace
The light of her who gave thee birth;
She who endowed thy form and face
With glory which is not of Earth.

And as I gaze upon her now,
My heart sends up a prayer for thee,
That thou mayest wear upon thy brow
The light which now she beams on me.

And thou wilt wear that love and light,
For thou 'rt the bud to such a flower:—
Oh fair the day, how blessed and bright,
Which finds thee in thy native bower!

LINES TO A LITTLE FRIEND.

THOU radiant playmate of the brook,—
The stream and thou are young together ;
Far down the flowery fields I look,—
Fields silent as a sabbath book,
And see the water winding thither.

O'er laughing wheels I see it shed ;
Then widening to the freighted river ;
Around yon purple headland spread
Lieth the ocean's azure bed,
And there at last it sleeps for ever.

The brook near by—the river far
 Winged with white sails in peace distended,
 All sweeping toward the headland bar,
 The prophets of thy future are,
 And, prophet-like, uncomprehended.

Who knows thy future pathway? Who
 Discerns through what strange fields it wendeth?
 Yet soon to you and such as you,
 This glorious world, the old and new,
 With all its weight of care descendeth.

The skies, with all their suns and showers,
 And all earth's gladness, and its sorrow,
 The mighty forests, fields, and flowers,
 The streams and seas, to-day are ours,
 But shall be yours to-morrow.

Endowed with every youthful grace
 Art thou; brave, generous, and tender;
 Fair be thy future as thy face,
 And few upon the earth shall trace
 A path so overspread with splendour!

THE WAY-SIDE.

Who starteth abroad in the shadowy morn,
With pack and with staff for some far-away bourne,
While lieth before him the road and the day,
He loveth, I ween, the bright things by the way :
They cheer him, and lighten the wearisome load
When the sultry white noon cometh down on the road ;
When the blacksnake is lying asleep in the sun,
And the small heated streams o'er their thirsty beds run ;
While, mocking the sense, where no breeze is at play,
Like fountains of water the white aspens quiver,
And the willow scarce moves with its slumberous sway,
Like the long idle grass in the low lazy river.
For him the bright mullein,
O'er its broad leaves so woollen,

Biddeth its golden flowers to glow,
Where the buttercup shines,
And the strawberry vines
Creep over the bank where the dandelions grow.

The wealthy may fence-in their beautiful ground,
Where the large and the rare flaunting flowers abound ;
The pilgrim who sits by the roadside alone,
Hath a garden as good and fenced out for his own !
An orchard of wild fruits, his brook and his spring,
Where the sweet birds from heaven all drop down to
sing ;—

There the oriole flits—and the butterflies throng,
And the wren giveth up its small tribute of song,
And the robin, from out the wild cherry, its strain,
While the small squirrel runs with its cheeks full of
grain.

From morning till night, through the sultriest day,
Bright, bright are the things by the wearisome way.

For there the bright mullein
O'er its broad leaves so woollen,
Biddeth its golden flowers to glow,
Where the buttercup shines,
And the strawberry vines
Creep over the bank where the dandelions grow.

“FRANCE IS FREE!”

Ch 20
New Orleans



A GREAT voice wakes a foreign land,
And a mighty murmur sweeps the sea,
While nations, dumb with wonder, stand,
To note what it may be ;—
The word rolls on like a hurricane's breath—
“*Down with the tyrant—come life or death,*
France must be free !”

“UPHARSIN” is writ on the Orleans wall,
And it needs no prophet to read the word—
The King has fled from his palace hall,
And there the mob is heard !

Where now

They shout in the heat of their maddened glee ;—
 (What sound can compare with a nation's cry
 When it leaps from bondage to liberty?)
 The voice sweeps on like a hurricane's breath,
 And the wondering world hears what it saith,
“ France, France is free !”

The rough-shod foot of the people tramps
 Through the silken rooms of royalty,
 And over the floor the mirrors and lamps
 Lie like the shattered monarchy ;
 They have grasped the throne in their irony,
 And have borne it aloft in mockery ;
 But as if the *ghost* of a king might be
 Still wielding a shadowy sceptre there,
 They dash it to earth, and trample it down,
 Shivered to dust with the Orleans crown,
 And shout with a voice that rends the air,
“ France, France is free !”

Oh, joy to the world ! the hour is come,
 When the nations to freedom awake,
 When the royalists stand agape and dumb,
 And monarchs with terror shake !

Over the walls of majesty

 "UPHARSIN" is writ in words of fire,

And the eyes of the bondmen, wherever they be,

 Are lit with their wild desire.

Soon, soon shall the thrones that blot the world,

Like the Orleans, into the dust be hurled,

And the word roll on like a hurricane's breath,

Till the farthest slave hears what it saith,

 "*Arise, arise, be free!*"

THE LAND OF THE WEST.

THOU land whose deep forest was wide as the sea,
And heaved its broad ocean of green to the day,
Or, waked by the tempest, in terrible glee
Flung up from its billows the leaves like a spray ;
The swift birds of passage still spread their fleets there,
Where sails the wild vulture, the pirate of air.

THOU land whose dark streams, like a hurrying horde
Of wilderness steeds without rider or rein,
Swept down, owning Nature alone for their lord,
Their foam flowing free on the air like a mane :—
Oh ! grand were thy waters, which spurned as they ran
The curb of the rock and the fetters of man !

Thou land whose bright blossoms, like shells of the sea,
Of numberless shapes and of many a shade,
Begemmed thy ravines where the hidden springs be,
And crowned the black hair of the dark forest maid ;—
Those flowers still bloom in the depth of the wild
To bind the white brow of the pioneer's child.

Thou land whose lost hamlets were circled with maize,
And lay like a dream in the silence profound,
While murmuring its song through the dark woodland
ways
The stream swept afar through the lone hunting-
ground :—
Now loud anvils ring in that wild forest home,
And mill-wheels are dashing the waters to foam.

Thou land where the eagle of Freedom looked down
From his eyried crag through the depths of the shade,
Or mounted at morn where no daylight can drown
The stars on their broad field of azure arrayed :—
Still, still to thy banner that eagle is true,
Encircled with stars on a heaven of blue !

THE ALCHEMIST'S DAUGHTER;

A DRAMATIC SKETCH.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

GIACOMO, *the Alchemist.*

BERNARDO, *his son-in-law.*

ROSALIA, *his daughter, and Bernardo's wife.*

LORENZO, *his servant.*

SCENE I. FERRARA.

The interior of Giacomo's house. Giacomo and Lorenzo discovered together. Time, a little before daybreak.

GIACOMO.

Art sure of this?

LORENZO.

Ay, signor, very sure.

'Tis but a moment since I saw the thing;
Bernardo, who last night was sworn thy son,
Hath made a villanous barter of thine honour:—
Thou mayest rely the Duke is where I said.

GIACOMO.

If so — no matter — give me here the light.

[*Exit Giacomo.*]

LORENZO. (*Alone.*)

Oh, what a night! It must be all a dream!
For twenty years, since that I wore a beard,
I've served my melancholy master here,
And never until now saw such a night!
A wedding in this silent house, forsooth,—
A festival! The very walls in mute
Amazement stared through the unnatural light;
And poor Rosalia, bless her tender heart,
Looked like her mother's sainted ghost! Ah me,
Her mother died long years ago, and took
One half the blessed sunshine from our house—
The other half was married off last night.
My master, solemn soul, he walked the halls
As if in search of something which was lost;
The groom, I liked not him, nor ever did,
Spake such perpetual sweetness, till I thought
He wore some sugared villany within:—
But then he is my master's ancient friend,
And always known the favourite of the Duke,
And, as I know, our lady's treacherous lord!
Oh, Holy Mother, that to villain hawks
Our dove should fall a prey! poor gentle dear!

Now if I had their necks within my grasp,
These fingers should be adders at their throats!
No matter—if my master be himself,
Nor time, nor place, shall bind up his revenge.
He's not a man to spend his wrath in noise,
But when his mind is made, with even pace
He walks up to the deed and does his will.
In fancy I can see him to the end—
The Duke, perchance, already breathes his last,
And for Bernardo—he will join him soon;
And for Rosalia, she will take the veil,
To which she hath been heretofore inclined;
And for my master, he will take again
To alchemy—a pastime well enough,
For aught I know, and honest Christian work.
Still it was strange how my poor mistress died,
Found, as she was, within her husband's study.
The rumour went she died of suffocation;
Some cursed crucible which had been left,
By Giacomo, aburning, filled the room,
And when the lady entered took her breath.
He found her there, and from that day the place
Has been a home for darkness and for dust.
I hear him coming; by his hurried step
There's something done, or will be very soon.

Enter Giacomo. (He sets the light upon the table, and confronts Lorenzo with a stern look.)

GIACOMO.

Lorenzo, thou hast served me twenty years,
And faithfully ; now answer me, how was 't
That thou wert in the street at such an hour ?

LORENZO.

When that the festival was o'er last night,
I went to join some comrades in their wine
To pass the time in memory of the event.

GIACOMO.

And doubtless thou wert blinded soon with drink ?

LORENZO.

Indeed, good signor, though the wine flowed free
I could not touch it, though much urged by all—
Too great a sadness sat upon my heart—
I could do nought but sit and sigh and think
Of our Rosalia in her bridal dress.

GIACOMO.

And sober too ! so much the more at fault.
But, as I said, thou 'st served me long and well,
Perchance too long—too long by just a day.
Here, take this purse, and find another master.

LORENZO.

Oh, signor, do not drive me thus away!
If I have made mistake—

GIACOMO.

No, sirrah, no!
Thou hast not made mistake, but something worse.

LORENZO.

Oh, pray you, what is that then I have made?

GIACOMO.

A lie!

LORENZO.

Indeed, good master, on my knees
I swear that what I said is sainted truth.

GIACOMO.

Pshaw, pshaw, no more of this. Did I not go
Upon the instant to my daughter's room
And find Bernardo sleeping at her side?
Some villain's gold hath bribed thee unto this.
Go, go.

LORENZO.

Well, if it must be, then it must.
But I would swear that what I said is truth,
Though all the devils from the deepest pit
Should rise to contradict me!

GIACOMO.

Prating still?

LORENZO.

No, signor—I am going—stay—see here—

(He draws a paper from his bosom.)

Oh, blessed Virgin, grant some proof in this!

This paper, as they changed their mantles, dropped
Between them to the ground, and when they passed
I picked it up and placed it safely here.

GIACOMO. *(Examining it.)*

Who forged the lie could fabricate this too:—

Get to thy duties, sir, and mark me well,

Let no word pass thy lips about the matter—

[Exit Lorenzo.]

Bernardo's very hand indeed is here!

Oh, compact villanous and black! Conditions,

The means, the hour, the signal—everything

To rob my honour of its holiest pearl!

Lorenzo, shallow fool—he does not guess

The mischief was all done, and that it was

The Duke he saw departing—oh, brain—brain!

How shall I hold this river of my wrath!

It must not burst—no, rather it shall sweep

A noiseless maelstrom, whirling to its centre

All thoughts and plans to further my revenge
And rid me of this most accursed blot!

(He rests his forehead on his hand a few minutes, and exclaims,)

The past returns to me again—the lore
I gladly had forgot, comes like a ghost,
And points with shadowy finger to the means
Which best shall consummate my just design.
The laboratory hath been closed too long;
The door smiles welcome to me once again,
The dusky latch invites my hand—I come!

(He unlocks the door and stands upon the threshold.)

Oh, thou whose life was stolen from me here,
Stand not to thwart me in this great revenge;
But rather come with large propitious eyes
Smiling encouragement with by-gone looks!
Ye sages whose pale, melancholy orbs
Gaze through the darkness of a thousand years,
Oh, pierce the solid blackness of to-day,
And fire anew this crucible of thought
Until my soul flames up to the result!

(He enters and the door closes.)

SCENE II. *Another apartment in the alchemist's house. Enter Rosalia and Bernardo.*

ROSALIA.

You tell me he has not been seen to-day?

BERNARDO.

Save by your trusty servant here, who says
He saw his master, from without, unclosed
The shutters of his laboratory while
The sun was yet unrisen. It is well ;
This turning to the past pursuits of youth
Argues how much the aspect of to-day
Hath driven the ancient darkness from his brain.
And now, my dear Rosalia, let thy face
And thoughts and speech be dressed in summer smiles,
And nought shall make a winter in our house.

ROSALIA.

Ah, sir, I *think* that I am happy !

BERNARDO.

Happy ?

Why so, indeed, dear love, I trust thou art !
But thou dost sigh and look along the floor
So vaguely, that thy happiness seems rather
The constant sense of duty than true joy.

ROSALIA.

Nay, chide me not, good sir ; the world to me
A riddle is at best—my heart has had
No tutor. From my childhood until now
My thoughts have been on simple honest things.

BERNARDO.

On *honest* things? Then let them dwell henceforth
On love, for nothing is more honest than
True love.

ROSALIA.

I hope so, sir—it must be so!
And if to wear thy happiness at heart
With constant watchfulness, and if to breathe
Thy welfare in my orisons, be love,
Thou never shalt have cause to question mine.
To-day I feel, and yet I know not why,
A sadness which I never knew before ;
A puzzling shadow swims upon my brain,
Of something which has been or is to be.
My mother coming to me in my dream,
My father taking to that room again,
Have somehow thrilled me with mysterious awe.

BERNARDO.

Nay, let not that o'ercast thy gentle mind :
For dreams are but as floating gossamer,
And should not blind or bar the steady reason ;
And alchemy is innocent enough,
Save when it feeds too greedily on gold,
A crime the world not easily forgives.

But if Rosalia likes not the pursuit
Her sire engages in, my plan shall be
To lead him quietly to other things.
But see, the door uncloses and he comes.

Enter Giacomo in loose gown and dishevelled hair.

GIACOMO. (*Not perceiving them.*)

Ha, precious villains, ye are caught at last!

BOTH.

Good-morrow, father.

GIACOMO.

Ah, my pretty doves!

BERNARDO.

Come, father, we are jealous of the art
Which hath deprived us all the day of thee.

GIACOMO.

Are ye indeed? (*Aside.*) How smoothly to the air
Slides that word *father* from his slippery tongue!
Come hither, daughter, let me gaze on thee;
For I have dreamed that thou wert beautiful,
So beautiful our very Duke did stop
To smile upon thy brightness! What say'st thou,
Bernardo, didst thou ever dream such things?

BERNARDO.

That she is beautiful I had no cause to dream,
Mine eyes have known the fact for many a day.
What villains didst thou speak of even now?

GIACOMO.

Two precious villains—Carbon and Azote—
They have perplexed me heretofore; but now
The thing is plain enough. This morning, ere
I left my chamber, all the mystery stood
Asudden in an awful revelation!

BERNARDO.

I'm glad success has crowned thy task to-day;
But do not overtoil thy brain. These themes
Are dangerous things, and they who mastered most
Have fallen at last but victims to their slaves.

GIACOMO.

It is a glorious thing to fall and die
The victim of a noble cause.

BERNARDO.

Ay, true—

The man who battles for his country's right
Hath compensation in the world's applause;
The victor when returning from the field
Is crowned with laurel, and his shining way

Is full of shouts and roses. If he fall,
His nation builds his monument of glory.
But mark the alchemist who walks the streets :
His look is down, his step infirm, his hair
And cheeks are burned to ashes by his thought ;
The volumes he consumes, consume in turn ;
They are but fuel to his fiery brain,
Which being fed requires the more to feed on.
The people gaze on him with curious looks,
And step aside to let him pass untouched,
Believing Satan hath him arm in arm.

GIACOMO.

Are there no wrongs but what a nation feels ?
No heroes but among the martial throng ?
Nay, there are patriot souls who never grasped
A sword, or heard the crowd applaud their names ;
Who lived and laboured, died and were forgot,
And after whom the world came out and reapt
The field, and never questioned who had sown.

BERNARDO.

I did not think of that.

GIACOMO.

Now mark ye well,
I am not one to follow phantom themes,

To waste my time in seeking for the stone,
Or crystallizing carbon to o'erflood
The world with riches which would keep it poor ;
Nor do I seek the elixir that would make
Not life alone, but misery immortal ;
But something far more glorious than these.

BERNARDO.

Pray what is that ?

GIACOMO.

A cure, sir, for the heart-ache.
Come, thou shalt see. The day is on the wane—
Mark how the moon, as by some unseen arm,
Is thrust towards heaven like a bloody shield !
On such an hour the experiment must begin.
Come, thou shalt be the first to witness this
Most marvellous discovery. And thou,
My pretty one, betake thee to thy bower,
And I will dream thou 'rt lovelier than ever.
Come, follow me. (*To Bernardo.*)

ROSALIA.

Nay, father, stay ; I'm sure
Thou art not well—thine eyes are strangely lit ;
The task, I fear, has overworked thy brain.

GIACOMO.

Dearest Rosalia, what were eyes or brain
Compared with banishment of sorrow? Come.

BERNARDO. (*Aside to Rosalia.*)

I will indulge awhile this curious humour;
Adieu; I shall be with thee soon again.

GIACOMO. (*Overhearing him.*)

When Satan shall regain his wings, and sit
Approved in heaven, perchance, but not till then.

BERNARDO.

What, "not till then?"

GIACOMO.

Shall he be worthy deemed
To walk, as thou hast said the people thought,
Linked with the mighty-souled philosopher:—
And yet the people sometimes are quite right—
The devil's at our elbow oftener than
We know.

(*He gives Bernardo his arm, and they enter the laboratory.*)

ROSALIA. (*Alone.*)

He never looked so strange before;
His cheeks are suddenly grown pale and thin;
His very hair seems whiter than it did.
Oh, surely, 't is a fearful trade that crowds

The work of years into a single day.
It may be that the sadness which I wear
Hath clothed him in its own peculiar hue.
The very sunshine of this cloudless morn
Seemed but a world of broad, white desolation—
While in my ears small melancholy bells
Knolled their long, solemn and prophetic chime ;—
But hark ! a louder and a holier toll,
Shedding its benediction on the air,
Proclaims the vesper hour—*Ave Maria !*

[*Exit Rosalia.*

SCENE III. *Giacomo and Bernardo discovered in the laboratory.*

GIACOMO.

What sayest thou now, Bernardo ?

BERNARDO.

Let me live
Or die in drawing this delicious breath,
I ask no more.

GIACOMO. (*Aside.*)

Mark, how with wondering eyes
He gazes on the burning crucibles,
As if to drink the rising vapour with
His every sense.

BERNARDO.

Is this the balm thou spak'st of ?

GIACOMO.

Ay, sir, the same.

BERNARDO.

Oh, would that now my heart
Were torn with every grief the earth has known,
Then would this sense be sweeter by tenfold!
Where didst thou learn the secret, and from whom?

GIACOMO.

From Gebber down to Paracelsus, none
Have mentioned the discovery of this—
The need of it was parent of the thought.

BERNARDO.

How long will these small crucibles hold out?

GIACOMO.

A little while, but there are two beside,
That when thy sense is toned up to the point
May then be fired; and when thou breath'st their fumes,
Nepenthe deeper it shall seem than that
Which Helen gave the guests of Menelaus.
But come, thou 'lt weary of this thickening air;
Let us depart.

BERNARDO.

Not for the wealth of worlds!

GIACOMO.

Nay, but thy bride awaits thee —

BERNARDO.

Go to her

And say I shall be there anon.

GIACOMO.

I will.

(*Aside.*) Now while he stands enchained within the
spell

I'll to Rosalia's room and don his cloak

And cap, and sally forth to meet the Duke.

'T is now the hour, and if he come — so be it.

[*Exit Giacomo.*]

BERNARDO. (*Alone.*)

These delicate airs seem wafted from the fields
Of some celestial world. I am alone —

Then wherefore not inhale that deeper draught,

That sweet nepenthe which these other two,

When burning, shall dispense? 'T were quickly done,

And I will do it!

(*He places the two crucibles on the furnace.*)

Now, Sir Alchemist,

Linger as long as it may suit thy pleasure —

'T is mine to tarry here. Oh, by St. John,

I'll turn philosopher myself, and do

Some good at last in this benighted world!
Now how like demons on the ascending smoke,
Making grimaces, leaps the laughing flame,
Filling the room with a mysterious haze,
Which rolls and writhes along the shadowy air,
Taking a thousand strange, fantastic forms;
And every form is lit with burning eyes,
Which pierce me through and through like fiery arrows!
The dim walls grow unsteady, and I seem
To stand upon a reeling deck! Hold, hold!
A hundred crags are toppling overhead.
I faint, I sink—now, let me clutch that limb—
Oh, devil! It breaks to ashes in my grasp!
What ghost is that which beckons through the mist?
The Duke! the Duke! and bleeding at the breast!
Whose dagger struck the blow?

Enter Giacomo.

GIACOMO.

Mine, villain, mine!

What! thou 'st set the other two aburning!
Impatient dog, thou cheat'st me to the last!
I should have done the deed—and yet 't is well,
Thou diest by thine own dull hardihood!

BERNARDO.

Ha! is it so? Then follow thou!

GIACOMO.

My time
Is not quite yet ; this antidote shall place
A bar between us for a little while.

(He raises a vial to his lips, drinks, and flings it aside.)

BERNARDO. *(Rallying.)*

Come, give it me—

GIACOMO.

Ha, ha ! I drained it all !
There is the broken vial.

BERNARDO.

Is there no arm
To save me from the abyss ?

GIACOMO.

No, villain, sink !
And take this cursed record of thy plot,
(He thrusts a paper into Bernardo's hand.)
And it shall gain thee speedy entrance at
The infernal gate !

(Bernardo reads, reels, and falls.)

GIACOMO. *(Looking on the body.)*

Poor miserable dust !
This body now is honest as the best,
The very best of earth, lie where it may.

My mantle must conceal the thing from sight ;
For soon Rosalia, as I bade her, shall
Be here. Oh, Heaven ! vouchsafe to me the power
To do this last stern act of justice. Thou
Who call'dst the child of Jairus from the dead,
Assist a stricken father now to raise
His sinless daughter from the bier of shame ;
And may her soul, unconscious of the deed,
For ever walk the azure fields of heaven.

Enter Rosalia, dressed in simple white, bearing a small golden crucifix in her hand.

ROSALIA.

Dear father, in obedience, I have come—
But where 's Bernardo?

GIACOMO.

Gone to watch the stars ;
To see old solitary Saturn whirl
Like poor Ixion on his burning wheel—
He is our patron orb to-night, my child.

ROSALIA.

I do not know what strange experiment
Thou 'dst have me see, but in my heart I feel
That He, in whose remembrance this was made,
(*Looking at the cross.*)
Should be chief patron of our thoughts and acts.

Since vesper time—I know not how it was—
I could do nought but kneel and tell my prayers.

GIACOMO.

Ye blessed angels, hymn the word to heaven.
Come, daughter, let me hold thy hand in mine,
And gaze upon the emblem which thou bearest.

(He looks upon the crucifix awhile and presses it to his lips.)

ROSALIA.

Pray tell me, father, what is in the air?

GIACOMO.

Seest thou the crucibles, my child? Now mark,
I'll drop a simple essence into each.

ROSALIA.

My sense is flooded with perfume!

GIACOMO.

Again.

ROSALIA.

My soul, asudden, thrills with such delight
It seems as it had won a birth of wings!

GIACOMO.

Behold, now when I throw these jewels in,
The glories of our art!

ROSALIA.

A cloud of hues

As beautiful as morning fills the air ;
And every breath I draw comes freighted with
Elysian sweets ! An iris-tinted mist,
In perfumed wreaths, is rolling round the room.
The very walls are melting from my sight,
And surely, father, there 's the sky o'erhead !
And on that gentle breeze did we not hear
The song of birds and silvery waterfalls ?
And walk we not on green and flowery ground ?
Ferrara, father, hath no ground like this ;
The ducal gardens are not half so fair !
Oh, if this be the golden land of dreams,
Let us for ever make our dwelling here.
Not lovelier in my earliest visions seemed
The paradise of our first parents, filled
With countless angels whose celestial light
Thrilled the sweet foliage like a gush of song.
Look how the long and level landscape gleams,
And with a gradual pace goes mellowing up
Into the blue ! The very ground we tread
Seems flooded with the tender hue of heaven ;
An azure lawn is all about our feet,
And sprinkled with a thousand gleaming flowers.

GIACOMO.

Nay, dear Rosalia, cast thy angel ken
Far down the shining pathway we have trod,
And see behind us those enormous gates
To which the world has given the name of Death ;
And note the least among yon knot of lights,
And recognise your native orb, the earth !
For we are spirits threading fields of space,
Whose gleaming flowers are but the countless stars !
But now, dear love, adieu — a flash from heaven —
A sudden glory in the silent air —
A rustle as of wings, proclaims the approach
Of holier guides to take thee into keep.
Behold them gliding down the azure hill,
Making the blue ambrosial with their light !
Our paths are here divided. I must go
Through other ways, by other forms attended.

SONG OF THE SERF.



I KNOW a lofty lady,
And she is wondrous fair;
She hath wrought my soul to music
As the leaves are wrought by air.
And like the air that wakes
The foliage into play,
She feels no thrill of all she makes
When she has passed away.
And she will pass as bright,
And be as calm as now,
Even though I wither in love's blight
And drop from life's young bough.

I know a lofty lady
 Who seldom looks on me,
Or when she smiles her smile is like
 The moon's upon the sea.
As proudly and serene
 She shines from her domain,
Till my spirit heaves beneath her mien
 And floods my aching brain.
Oh! I tremble when I see
 The coming of her light,
For when she goes I know 't will be
 A doubly darkened night.

I know a lofty lady:—
 But I would not wake her scorn
By telling all the love I bear,
 For I am lowly born;
So low, and she so high—
 And the space between us spread
Makes me but as the weeds that lie
 Beneath her stately tread.
I would not her imperial state
 With mine were levelled down;
But would that iron-handed Fate
 Had raised me to a crown.

TO THE WIFE OF A POET.

THERE is a strange enchantment in those eyes,
A most mysterious witchery of light,
Which, like a meteor, kindles as it flies,
And leaves a glory when it fades from sight.
Their sudden splendour, like some magian's wand,
Transports me where the oriental skies
Pavilion all that's beautiful and bright
Within the spicy vales of Persia's land,
Till in the shade of 'Tefflis' ancient towers,
I see the sacred maids of those forbidden bowers.

And in the gorgeous courts of old Castile,
Or the Alhambra's tessellated halls,
Thy glances lead me, till I see and feel
The glory of the Past within those walls.

I see the knights ride out on fiery steeds,
And in the tourney watch them plunge and wheel,
 Until the fated one defeated falls
And in the loud arena prostrate bleeds !
A king might proudly break a royal lance,
To win from eyes like thine one bright approving
 glance !

Such eyes saw she, the one imperial queen
 Of all the realm of Intellect, De Stael,
When her own soul, which she had named "Co-
 rinne,"
 Stood like a Sibyl in the Capitol,
Holding Italia breathless with her spell :—
Such were the eyes by glowing Raphael seen ;
 And such, it may be, lit the prison wall
When Tasso dreamed of love within his cell ;—
And had not Nature touched thy minstrel's tongue,
The sunshine of thy looks had melted him to song !

THE NAMELESS.



COME fill, my merry friends, to-night,
And let the winds unheeded blow,
And we will wake the deep delight
Which true hearts only know.
And ere the passing wine be done,
Come drink to those most fair and dear,
And I will pledge a cup to one
Who shall be nameless here.

Come fill, nor let the flagon stand,
Till pleasure's voice shall drown the wind,
Nor heed old Winter's stormy hand
Which shakes the window-blind.

And down the midnight hour shall run
The brightest moments of the year ;
While I will fill, my friends, to one
Who shall be nameless here.

Pledge you to lips that smile in sleep,
Whose dreams have strewed your path with flowers,
And to those sacred eyes that weep
Whene'er your fortune lowers ;
And charm the night, ere it be done,
With names that are for ever dear,
While I must pour and quaff to one
Who shall be nameless here.

To her I proudly poured the first
Inspiring beaker of the Rhine,
And still it floods my veins as erst
It filled the German wine.
And when her memory, like the sun,
Shall widen down my dying year,
My latest cup will be to one
Who shall be nameless here.

THE NEW VILLAGE.

DEAR to our hearts are homes and household fires,
Where youthful pleasures hailed each happy morn;
Where sang our mothers, and where sat our sires,
Whose blessed looks our memories adorn.
Sacred the threshold by their footsteps worn,
From whence at last went forth the funeral train—
Leaving our hearts by bitter anguish torn;
Sacred the ground where their dear dust has lain;
Sacred the church, the town, and the surrounding plain.

Not less the Indian loves his native spot,
Nor walks he less in memory's blessed beam;
His parents, playmates, and the clay-built cot,
Melt o'er his senses like a morning dream.

See the small village sloping to the stream
Beneath the arch of the ancestral wood ;
Along the shade the dusky children teem,
Waking in mimic chase the solitude,
Free as their Eden-sire, as innocently nude.

Here dusky maidens roam through nature's bowers,
Mating with fawns along the pathless ways,
Blithesome as birds, as sinless as the flowers,
Wild as the brook, and wandering where it strays,
Pouring to heaven their sweet, unconscious praise ;
The foliage bends to greet them as they pass,
And buds unfold to court their tender gaze ;
The daisies kiss their foot-falls in the grass,
And little streams stand still to paint them in their glass.

Up with the day and glowing as the morn,
Along the brook the laughing children wade ;
The happy matron grinds the golden corn—
The sturdy hunters, for the chase arrayed,
Swift as their arrows flash from sun to shade :
Some spear the fish, and some collect the nut,
Till twilight sheds her shadows o'er the glade ;
And when the day by peaceful night is shut,
Sleep, like an angel, reigns in every quiet hut.

But now the Indian dons his painted dress,
And burning glances flash their wordless ire,
Murdering peace through all the wilderness ;
And youthful Brave and gray and wrinkled Sire
Weave the wild war-dance at the midnight fire,
Where war-clubs, waved by naked arms and strong,
And knives and axes, speak the wild desire,
And maids and matrons mingle in the throng,
Swelling the sullen tide of dull, monotonous song.

Such now their nights ; but at the approach of day
Low sinks the fire, and dies the warlike sound,
While through the woods the warriors glide away,
And on the victim spring with sudden bound,
Hurling the hated settler to the ground.
Not long the Indian's skill or strength defies
The tide which westward bears its way profound ;
Conquered at last, the flying tribe descries
Its ancient wigwams burn, and light its native skies.

The pioneers their gleaming axes swing,
The sapling falls, and dies the forest's sire—
The foliage fades—but sudden flames upspring,
And all the grove is leafed again with fire ;

While gleams the pine tree like a gilded spire,
The homeless birds sail, circling wild, and high ;
At night the wolves gaze out their fierce desire ;
For weeks the smoke spreads, blotting all the sky,
While, twice its size, the sun rolls dull and redly by.

Before the cabin on the river's side,
When in the unknown west the day is done,
The labourers talk away the eventide,
Rehearse the plan so gloriously begun,
What house to rear, and where the street shall run
The morning comes, and with its earliest gleam
Loud ring the anvils, glowing like the sun ;
There fall the axe and adze that shape the beam,
And here the noisy raftsmen labour in the stream.

Behold the village ! There the tavern grows,
A little inn with large, inviting sign ;
There the new store its mingled medley shows ;
And over all, yet simple in design,
The general care, ascends the house Divine ;
The unfinished steeple, like a skeleton,
Shows the blue sky between its ribs of pine ;
Its gilded summit courts the early sun,
And holds it latest when the toilsome day is done.

Now from the belfry rings a cheerful sound,
The air hangs trembling between joy and fear,
And echoes answer from the hills around,
Frightening the wild duck from the sedgy mere,
While trembles by the stream the listening deer,
Bending to drink the creature stands deterred ;
The squirrel drops his nut and turns to hear ;
All nature listens like a startled bird,
To hear the marriage bell, the first those forests heard.

But hark ! again the melancholy toll,
Spreading the shadow of the pall around,
While nature answers to its dreadful dole ;
Beside the church there lies the sacred ground,
And in its midst is made the first new mound ;
The fairest flower of all that western space
Sleeps in the grave, by sweetest blossoms crowned —
The pure in heart ; the beautiful in face—
A fitting dust was hers to consecrate the place !

Thus it begins ; but who shall know the end ?
What prophet's thought shall down the future go,
To tell how oft again that bell shall send
Through all the vale the notes of joy or wo ;

What graves shall sink ; what countless mounds shall
grow—

What rich, aspiring temples there shall stand
For Time to darken and to overthrow ;

How there at last shall lurk some savage band,
While woods and wolves unchecked shall claim their
native land ?

BALBOA.



FROM San Domingo's crowded wharf
Fernandez' vessel bore,
To seek in unknown lands afar
The Indian's golden ore.

And hid among the freighted casks,
Where none might see or know,
Was one of Spain's immortal men,
Three hundred years ago!

But when the fading town and land
Had dropped below the sea,
He met the captain face to face,
And not a fear had he!

“What villain thou?” Fernandez cried,
“And wherefore serve us so?”
“To be thy follower,” he replied,
Three hundred years ago.

He wore a manly form and face,
A courage firm and bold,
His words fell on his comrades’ hearts
Like precious drops of gold.

They saw not his ambitious soul ;
He spoke it not—for lo !
He stood among the common ranks
Three hundred years ago.

But when Fernandez’ vessel lay
At golden Darien,
A murmur, born of discontent,
Grew loud among the men :

And with the word there came the act ;
And with the sudden blow
They raised Balboa from the ranks,
Three hundred years ago.

And while he took command beneath
The banner of his lord,
A mighty purpose grasped his soul,
As he had grasped the sword.

He saw the mountain's far blue height,
Whence golden waters flow ;
Then with his men he scaled the crags,
Three hundred years ago.

He led them up through tangled brakes,
The rivulet's sliding bed,
And through the storm of poisoned darts
From many an ambush shed.

He gained the turret crag — alone —
And wept ! to see below,
An ocean, boundless and unknown,
Three hundred years ago.

And while he raised upon that height
The banner of his lord,
The mighty purpose grasped him still,
As still he grasped his sword.

Then down he rushed with all his men,
As headlong rivers flow,
And plunged knee-deep into the sea,
Three hundred years ago.

And while he held above his head
The conquering flag of Spain,
He waved his gleaming sword, and smote
The waters of the Main :

For Rome ! for Leon ! and Castile !
Thrice gave the cleaving blow ;
And thus Balboa claimed the sea,
Three hundred years ago.

A VISION OF DEATH,
AN EXTRACT.

(An old man discovered in a country grave-yard.)

OLD MAN.

BENEATH this simple mound lies much, how much !
That living made earth lovelier, and was
The throne and crown unto my own sad world
Of Love and Hope, which make the total sum
Of all that man calls happiness. Bloom, bloom,
Ye little blossoms ! and if beauty can
Like other purest essences exhale,
And penetrate the mould, your flowers shall be
Of rarest hue and perfume. I would see

Ye in a fair inscription gild her dust
With thoughts no mortal hand shall dare. And you,
Ye little wingèd choirs of air, who chant
From over fulness of the heart, as do
The winds which breathe upon the rustling grass,
Or roar along the ocean, till his waves
Thunder and hiss in foamy cataracts,—
Chant ye to-day and to all coming time,
Without the aid of burnished instrument,
The hollow organ of a seventhday pile,
But from your hearts with well accustomed throats,
Which loud from Sabbath unto Sabbath make
Perpetual worship, pour a requiem for
The early lost, or rather say removed.
Would I might follow! wherefore do I stay?
Can there still be in this poor tottering frame,
Which usurous Time has long since bankrupt made,
Aught which can make it valuable to life?
This palsied head of its own free accord,
Which negatively shakes its beggared hairs,
Answers, how truly! Wherefore do I stay?
I have outlived all that inflamed my youth,
Or made my manhood resolute—outlived
A whole misfortune of ancestral gold,
And all the joy which empty Fame bestows;
Two things of boundless sway, which are at once

The strong man's weakness and the weak man's strength.

A strange sensation through this wreck of dust
Proclaims a dissolution—let it come.

Oh Death, time was when I had deemed thy name
A terror, and thy cold and fleshless hand
A thing to shrink from!—it is not so now—
Next to the names of those who gave me life
Thine is the dearest, and the next to hers
Whose hand thou hast usurped, I would clasp thine.
How now? these marble monuments like ghosts
Do rise and stand above their natural wont,
And waver in the wind—I faint—who speaks?

The SPIRIT OF DEATH answers from the air.

'T is He whose name but now was on thy lips.
Thou didst desire me; dost now repent?

OLD MAN.

No!

DEATH.

But thou dost tremble!

OLD MAN.

Not at thee, for yet
I do behold thee not—this tenement
Doth topple with the weight of years;—thy breath

May crumble it to dust; but thou shalt see
The spirit standing on the ruin here;
And face to face answering speech for speech,
Fearless as I do now. I can dare all!

DEATH.

Dost thou defy?

OLD MAN.

Nothing except thy terrors.
My soul was fashioned for command, not fear.

DEATH.

Command'st thou me?

OLD MAN.

No, not as did the hag
Of Endor the poor ghost, for I have still
Enough of courage to brave more of life;
But being here thou art most welcome.

DEATH.

Nay,
But knowest thou what I am?

OLD MAN.

If thou art Death,
Then have I pictured thee a spirit fair,
And full of loving kindness unto all;

In love thou seal'st the infant's waxen eyes,
And tak'st the lily maiden to thy breast,
Or pour'st a healing balm in Manhood's wounds,
Or oil upon the troubled waves of Age.
Speak I not true?

DEATH.

Words may not answer that.
Now let thine eyes instead, compare the picture—
Come, look on me!

OLD MAN.

I do!

DEATH.

Well, what say'st thou?
Am I the thing of terror men have chosen
To name me?

OLD MAN.

Wonder, like the unloosed wind
Seizes me—I cannot speak—yet—

DEATH.

Would not
Curse me?

OLD MAN.

Curse thee? Oh no! a thousand tongues
Are clamorous within my soul to sing

Thy great, surprising loveliness — Thine eyes
 Are wells of pity and of love, thy lips
 Wreathed with the sainted smile of her who blessed
 My earliest infancy. All that the world
 E'er crowned me with, of sweet and beautiful,
 Is crowded in the compass of thy face.
 Art thou thus lovely unto all ?

DEATH.

I am

What they who find me make me — Shall we go ?

OLD MAN.

Whither ?

DEATH.

Upward — and onward, into outer space,
 Where she, thy kindred spirit, waiteth thee.

OLD MAN.

Most willingly — but stay, one moment yet,
 To let me gaze where I shall gaze no more,
 On this new mound — Hold ! what is this which lies
 Across her grave — The figure of a man !
 A poor old man, in dusty, threadbare robes ;
 See there, how thin his hair is and how white !
 How pale he looks ! and yet he wears a smile ;
 Oh, now if I had alms to give, here —

DEATH.

Alas !

Hast thou forgot thine own poor tenement
So soon ?—

(The spirit of the Old Man leaning over the body exclaims,)

'T is not a face that I am used
To look upon—poor dust !
When Death leads him gently away.

THE FAIRER LAND.*

ALL the night, in broken slumber,
I went down the world of dreams,
Through a land of war and turmoil
Swept by loud and labouring streams,
Where the masters wandered, chanting
Ponderous and tumultuous themes.

Chanting from unwieldy volumes
Iron maxims stern and stark,
Truths that swept and burst and stumbled
Through the ancient rifted dark ;

* This has already been published as the poem to a volume of
"The Female Poets of America," edited by the Author.

Till my soul was tossed and worried,
Like a tempest-driven bark.

But anon, within the distance,
 Stood the village vanes aflame,
And the sunshine, filled with music,
 To my oriel casement came ;
While the birds sang pleasant valentines
 Against my window frame.

Then by sights and sounds invited,
 I went down to meet the morn,
Saw the trailing mists roll inland
 Over rustling fields of corn,
And from quiet hillside hamlets
 Heard the distant rustic horn.

There, through daisied dales and byways,
 Met I forms of fairer mould,
Pouring songs for very pleasure—
 Songs their hearts could not withhold—
Setting all the birds a-singing
 With their delicate harps of gold.

Some went plucking little lily-bells,
 That withered in the hand ;
Some, where smiled a summer ocean,
 Gathered pebbles from the sand ;
Some, with prophet eyes uplifted,
 Walked unconscious of the land.

Through that Fairer World I wandered
 Slowly, listening oft and long,
And as one behind the reapers,
 Without any thought of wrong,
Loitered, gleaning for my garner
 Flowery sheaves of sweetest song.

MANHOOD.

MAN, like his Eden sire, walks fresh from God,
In panoply of majesty and power ;
And stands upon his mount of strength supreme,
Firm footed as the oak. The earth is his,
For he has forced the king of beasts to crouch, and
brought
The eagle from his eyried crag, and made
A traffic of the seas leviathan ;
And from the mountain's stubborn breast hath torn
Its iron heart, or traced the rich red ore
Along its shining veins. The vales, where erst
Free Nature held her sabbath all the year,

He fills with week-day turmoil ; and the woods
Are bowed before him, while the quiet trees
Are moulded into temples broad and high,
Or hewn to build the ocean's wingèd arks,
That link together far ends of the earth
With chains of commerce over dangerous seas.
Man spreads the sail, and with his strong right arm
He holds the helm 'against the tempest's wrath ;
Or when the treacherous reef is struck, he clasps
The fainting form and struggles to the shore.
He wears his country's arms, and faces death
To plant above the bulwarks of the foe
The standard of his native land.

Than this

A faculty diviner still is his ;
For he hath on the walls of science stood,
Gray walls, whose towering turrets well nigh reach
The prophet's dome of inspiration ;—there
With all the book of space before him spread,
Hath read its starry pages, and transcribed
Its wonders for the waiting world below !
But man, endowed with all the powers of earth,
The form majestic, and the strong right arm,

With intellect to penetrate the skies,
To unriddle the enigma of the stars,—
Must cast aside his dusty strength, and lay
His little knowledge humbly by, and take
The tender innocence which childhood wears,
And he shall be invested with the power,
The majesty, and wisdom of the immortals.

FRAGMENTS FROM THE REALM OF DREAMS.

“ The baseless fabric of a vision.”



OFt have I wandered through the Realm of Dreams,
By shadowy mountains and clear running streams,
Catching at times strange transitory gleams
Of Eden vistas, glimmering through a haze
Of floral splendour, where the birds, ablaze
With colour, streaked the air like flying stars,
With momentary bars;
And heard low music breathe above, around,
As if the air within itself made sound,—
As if the soul of Melody were pent
Within some unseen instrument,

Hung in a viewless tower of air,
And with enchanted pipes beguiled its own despair.
But stranger than all other dreams which led,
Asleep or waking, my adventurous tread,
Were these which came of late to me
Through fields of slumber, and did seem to be
Wrapped in an awful robe of prophecy.

I walked the woods of March, and through the boughs
The earliest bird was calling to his spouse ;
And in the sheltered nooks
Lay spots of snow,
Or with a noiseless flow
Stole down into the brooks ;
And where the springtime sun had longest shone
The violet looked up and found itself alone.
Anon I came unto a noisy river,
And felt the bridge beneath me sway and quiver ;
Below, the hungry waters howled and hissed,
And upward blew a blinding cloud of mist ;
But there the friendly Iris built its arch,
And I in safety took my onward march.
Now coming to a mighty hill,
Along the shelvy pathway of a rill

Which danced itself to foam and spray,
I clomb my steady way.
It may be that the music of the brook
Gave me new strength—It may be that I took
Fresh vigour from the mountain air
Which cooled my cheek and fanned my hair;
Or was it that adown the breeze
Came sounds of wondrous melodies,—
Strange sounds as of a maiden's voice
Making her mountain home rejoice?
Following that sweet strain, I mounted still
And gained the highest hemlocks of the hill,
Old guardians of a little lake, which sent
Adown the brook its crystal merriment,
Blessing the valley where the planter went
Sowing the furrowed mould and whistling his content.
Though underwood of laurel, and across
A little lawn shoe-deep with sweetest moss,
I passed, and found the lake, which, like a shield
Some giant long had ceased to wield,
Lay with its edges sunk in sand and stone,
With ancient roots and grasses overgrown;
But far more beautiful and rare
Than any strange device that e'er
Glittered upon the azure field
Of ancient warrior's polished shield,

Was the fair vision which did lie
Embossed upon the burnished lake,
And in its sweet repose did make
A second self that sang to the inverted sky.
Not she who lay on banks of thornless flowers
Ere stole the Serpent into Eden's bowers ;
Not she who rose from Neptune's deep abodes
The wonder of Olympian Gods ;
Nor all the fabled nymphs of wood or stream
Which blest the Arcadian's dream,
Could with that floating form compare,
Lying with her golden harp and hair
Bright as a cloud in the sunset air.
Her tresses gleamed with many stars,
And on her forehead one, like Mars,
A lovely crown of light dispread
Around her shining head.
And now she touched her harp and sung
Strange songs in a forgotten tongue ;
And as my spirit heard, it seemed
To feel what it had lived or dreamed
In other worlds beyond our skies,—
In ancient spheres of Paradise ;
And as I gazed upon her face
It seemed that I could dimly trace

Dear lineaments long lost of yore
Upon some unremembered shore,
Beyond an old and infinite sea,
In the realm of an unknown century.
For very joy I clapped my hands,
And leaped upon the nearer sands!—
A moment, and the maiden glanced
Upon me where I stood entranced;
'Then noiselessly as moonshine falls
Adown the ocean's crystal walls,
And with no stir or wave attended,
Slowly through the lake descended;
Till from her hidden form below
The waters took a golden glow,
As if the star which made her forehead bright
Had burst and filled the lake with light!
Long standing there I watched in vain,
The vision would not rise again.

Again, in sleep, I walked by singing streams,
And it was May-day in my Realm of Dreams:—
The flowering pastures and the trees
Were full of noisy birds and bees;
And swinging roses, like sweet censers, went
The village children making merriment,

Followed by older people ;—as they passed
One beckoned, and I joined the last.
We crossed the meadow, crossed the brook,
And through the scented woodland took
Our happy way, until we found
An open space of vernal ground ;
And there around the flowery pole
I joined the joyous throng and sang with all my soul !
But when the little ones had crowned their queen,
And danced their mazes to the wooded scene
To hunt the honey-suckles, and carouse
Under the spice-wood boughs,—
I turned, and saw with wondering eye
A maiden in a bower near by,
Wreathed with unknown blossoms, such as bloom
In orient isles with wonderful perfume.
And she was very beautiful and bright ;
And in her face was much of that strange light
Which on the mountain lake had blessed my sight ;
Her speech was like the echo of that song
Which on the hillside made me strong.
Now with a wreath, now with a coin she played,
Pursuing a most marvellous trade—
Buying the lives of young and old,
Some with Fame, and some with gold !

And there with trembling steps I came,
But ere I asked for gold or fame,
Or ere I could announce my name,
The wreath fell withered from her head,
And from her face the mask was shed ;
Her mantle dropped—and lo ! the morning sun
Looked on me through a nameless skeleton !

Again I stood within the Realm of Dreams,
At midnight, on a huge and shadowy tower ;
And from the east the full moon shed her beams,
And from the sky a wild meteoric shower
Startled the darkness ; and the night
Was full of ominous voices and strange light,
Like to a madman's brain ;—below
Prophetic tongues proclaiming wo
Echoed the sullen roar
Of Ocean on the neighbouring shore ;
And in the west a forest caught the sound
And bore it to its utmost bound.
And then, for hours, all stood as to behold
Some great event by mighty seers foretold ;
And all the while the moon above the sea
Grew strangely large and red,—and suddenly,

Followed by a myriad stars,
Swung at one sweep into the western sky,
And, widening with a melancholy roar,
Broke to a hundred flaming bars,
Grating the heavens as with a dungeon door.
Then to that burning gate
A radiant spirit came, and through the grate
Smiled till I knew the Angel, Fate !
And in its hand a golden key it bore
To open that celestial door.
Sure, I beheld that angel thrice ;
Twice met on earth, it mocked me twice ;
But now behind those bars it beamed
Such love as I had never dreamed,
Smiling my prisoned soul to peace
With eyes that promised quick release ;
And looks thus spake to looks, where lips on earth
were dumb,
“ Behold, behold the hour is come ! ”

COME, gentle trembler, come—for see,
Our hearths have lost their native fires;
The vacant world invites us,—we
Must go the heirless heirs of countless sires.

Let us away, the wild wolf's home
Were not so desolate as ours;
Beside the singing brooks we'll roam,
And seek a sweet community of flowers.

Here are the dwellings whence the few
We loved, departed; where they lead
We follow—these their tombs;—but who
Shall write our epitaphs, and who shall read?

Hark, how the light winds flow and ebb
Along the open halls forlorn ;
See how the spider's dusty web
Floats at the casement, tenantless and torn !

The old, old Sea, as one in tears,
Comes murmuring with its foamy lips,
And knocking at the vacant piers,
Calls for its long-lost multitude of ships.

Against the stone-ribbed wharf, one hull
Throbs to its ruin like a breaking heart :
Oh, come, my breast and brain are full
Of sad response—Grim Silence keep the mart !

THE WAY.

A WEARY, wandering soul am I,
O'erburthened with an earthly weight ;
A pilgrim through the world and sky,
Toward the Celestial Gate.

Tell me, ye sweet and sinless flowers,
Who all night gaze upon the skies,
Have ye not in the silent hours
Seen aught of Paradise ?

Ye birds, that soar and sing, elate
With joy, that makes your voices strong,
Have ye not at the golden gate
Caught somewhat of your song ?

Ye waters, sparkling in the morn,
Ye seas, which glass the starry night,
Have ye not from the imperial bourn
Caught glimpses of its light?

Ye hermit oaks, and sentinel pines,
Ye mountain forests old and gray,
In all your long and winding lines
Have ye not seen the way?

O! moon, among thy starry bowers,
Know'st thou the path the angels tread?
Seest thou beyond thy azure towers
The shining gates dispread?

Ye holy spheres, that sang with earth
When earth was still a sinless star,
Have the immortals heavenly birth
Within your realms afar?

And thou, O sun! whose light unfurls
Bright banners through unnumbered skies,
Seest thou among thy subject worlds
The radiant portals rise?

All, all are mute! and still am I
O'erburthened with an earthly weight;
A pilgrim through the world and sky,
Toward the Celestial Gate.

No answer wheresoe'er I roam—
From skies afar no guiding ray;
But, hark! the voice of Christ says, "Come?
Arise! I am the way!"

THE MARSEILLAISE.

“Among every class of people who participated openly in the Revolution, might be heard the *Marseillaise* hymn.”



I HEARD, as in a glorious dream,
A clarion thrill the startled air,
And saw an answering people stream
Through every noisy thoroughfare.
There were the old, whose hairs were few,
Or white with memory of the days
Of Egypt, Moscow, Waterloo,—
And now they sang the “*Marseillaise*!”

The aged scholar, pale and wan,
Was there within the marshalled line,
And jostled by the noisy van,
The poet with his voice divine :—
No more could tomes the sage beguile ;
The bard no longer wooed the praise
That dribbles from a monarch's smile,
For now they sang the "*Marseillaise!*"

And there were matrons, who of yore
Had wept a son or husband slain,
Or chanted for their Emperor
A long and loud triumphal strain :—
Their wo inspired the song no more,
Nor yet Napoleon's crown of bays,
Which rankly sprang from fields of gore,
For now they sang the "*Marseillaise!*"

The peasants, from their hills of vines,
Came streaming to the open plains ;
No more they bore their tax of wines
To stagnate in a tyrant's veins ;
France needed not the purple flood
To set her heart and brain ablaze,—
A wilder wine was in her blood,
For now she sang the "*Marseillaise!*"

The Bourbon's throne was trampled down,
And France no longer knelt ; but now,
Struck with a patriot's hand the crown
From off the Orleans' dotard brow ;—
Released from slavery and tears,
She rose and sang fair Freedom's praise,
Till far along the future years
I heard the swelling "*Marseillaise* !"

THE WITHERING LEAVES.

THE summer is gone and the autumn is here,
And the flowers are strewing their earthy bier ;
A dreary mist o'er the woodland swims,
While rattle the nuts from the windy limbs :
From bough to bough the squirrels run
At the noise of the hunter's echoing gun,
And the partridge flies where my footstep heaves
The rustling drifts of the withering leaves.

The flocks pursue their southern flight—
Some all the day and some all night ;
And up from the wooded marshes come
The sounds of the pheasants' feathery drum.
On the highest bough the mourner crow
Sits in his funeral suit of wo :
All nature mourns—and my spirit grieves
At the noise of my feet in the withering leaves.

Oh! I sigh for the days that have passed away,
When my life like the year had its season of May;
When the world was all sunshine and beauty and truth,
And the dew bathed my feet in the valley of youth!
Then my heart felt its wings, and no bird of the sky
Sang over the flowers more joyous than I.
But Youth is a fable, and Beauty deceives;—
For my footsteps are loud in the withering leaves.

And I sigh for the time when the reapers at morn
Came down from the hill at the sound of the horn:
Or when dragging the rake, I followed them out
While they tossed the light sheaves with their laughter
about;
Through the field, with boy-daring, barefooted I ran;
But the stubbles foreshadowed the path of the man.
Now the uplands of life lie all barren of sheaves—
While my footsteps are loud in the withering leaves!

L'ENVOI.



I BRING the flower you asked of me,
A simple bloom, nor bright nor rare,
But like a star its light will be
Within the darkness of your hair.

It grew not in those guarded bowers
Where rustling fountains sift their spray,
But gladly drank the common showers
Of dew beside the dusty way.

It may be in its humble sphere
It cheered the pilgrim of the road,
And shed as blest an alms, as e'er
The generous hand of Wealth bestowed.

Or though, save mine, it met no eye,
But secretly looked up and grew,
And from the loving air and sky
Its little store of beauty drew ;

And though it breathed its small perfumes
So low they did not woo the bee,—
Exalted, how it shines and blooms,
Above all flowers, since worn by thee.

And thus the song you bade me sing,
May be a rude and artless lay,
And yet it grew a sacred thing
To bless me on Life's dusty way.

And unto this, my humble strain,
How much of beauty shall belong,
If thou wilt in thy memory deign
To wear my simple flower of song !

THE END.

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